

Beaumont Newhall
[11] 444017
POSTSCRIPT

TO A

BOOK

Published the Last Year,

ENTITLED

CONSIDERATIONS

ON

Dr. Burnet's Theory of the Earth.

MANY Persons, since the publishing my *Considerations on Dr. Burnet's Theory of the Earth*, having used Cavillations against some parts of them, viz. where I seem to leave some things in Mystery, which they will needs have to proceed from Enthusiasm: Some having done this in my Presence, and Others where I have not been present, as I have been Inform'd by many Friends: I have thought fit, by printing this Paper, to bring the Matter above Board, and to see what may be said in

A

the

the Case; and try whether we cannot sound the Depths of these Mens Thoughts as they take upon them to judge others.

To dissuade a Man from leaving any thing he writes, or discourses on, in Mystery, I remembred to have read an Ingenious Writer of *Polizick Essays*, who says, *That a man renders himself as lyable to Censure, by offering to maintain a Mysterious Truth, as an open Falsehood*; and therefore he dissuades Men, by all means, from meddling in Mysteries. I remembred also that *Ecclesiastical Maxim* of Melancthon; *Solent homines aut odisse aut superbe contemnere quæ non intelligunt*. I called to mind the old Tricks, both of *Æsop's Fox*, which cried out, that the Grapes were sour, which were out of his Reach; and of his ill natur'd Curr in the Manger, which would not permit the Horse to eat Oats, when he cared not to eat them himself. I remembred likewise those wretches mentioned in the *Scriptures*, who damm'd up *Isaac's Wells*, and would not permit him to draw Waters for his Use, though themselves made no use of them. *Moses* does not say, if the *Paschal Lamb* cannot be eaten by your self, it must presently be burnt; but first call in your Neighbour, and if he cannot eat it, then let it be committed to the Fire. And as for some things which may seem obscurely intimated in my Work, I well know there are many Men in the World who will fully apprehend what they import; but if all do not, I cannot help it. Are there not *Tacenda* on many Accounts, in the common Practice of Life? And why may there not be in some parts of Learning? It's known that the greatest Writers among Mankind have left a great Part of what they have writ, wrapt up in Enigma's; or however they have otherwise exprest themselves, it's intelligible only to a few. Are *Roger Bacon*, *Picus Mirandula*, *Joannes Trithemius*, *Cornelius Agrippa*, *Joannes Reuchlin*, our *Dr. Dee*, any of the whole Tribe of *Hermetick Philosophers*,

Philosophers, or any Masters of a Contemplative Life among the *Jews*, *Gentiles*, or *Christians*, I say, are any of these open in all things they write, so that every Man acquainted in Common School Learning, or any Man, acquainted in no more, understands them? Or have the Writers of the Scriptures, or *Christ* himself thought fit, still to be open to every Man's Capacity? Because in the first Chapter of my *Considerations*, I mention a *Promethean Arcanum Astrologicum*, and a *Seven Reed Pipe of Pan* without a farther Explanation, some will needs have This to be Enthusiasm: Now as for the *Promethean Arcanum Astrologicum*, *Prometheus* is known to have been Famous for some notable Skill he had in *Astrology*, as a School-Boy may read in any *Mythologist*: And the *Assyrians* are known to have been the most Famous, of any Men in the World, for *Astrology*, and their most *Ancient Astronomical Observations*, which Sciences they are said to have first learnt of *Prometheus*. And there are many Men living in the World, who know themselves to have been touch'd by the Rod of *Prometheus*, or of some Priest of *Apollo* touch before at the Chariot of the Sun; whereby They are become animated with a lively and penetrating *Ætherial Spirit*; whereas before they were as Lumps of Clay, conversant only with the outside Barks of things: And in Reference to this, Men may remember the Epitaph of the Antient Poet *Colophonius Phœnix* on *Ninus*, where reflecting on him for his giving himself wholly over to the Vanities and Pleasures of this Life; among other things he says thus of him;

*Astra nunquam vidit, nec forsitan id optavit
 Ignem apud Magos sacrum non excitavit;
 Deum nec virgis attigit, &c.*

It's of this Fire of the *Magi* that *Zoroaster* speaks in the *Oracles*: *Quando videris Ignem Sacrum, formâ sine Collocutionem, totius per profundum Mundi, Audi Ignis Vocem.* And I know Men in our Nation, who have seen this Fire, and hearkned with Dread to the Voice of it.

And even in the Temple of Jerusalem, as in the Holy Place, on the North side stood, on a Table, the Twelve Loaves of Shewbread, denoting, as *Josephus* tells us, the Twelve Signs of the Zodiac, and having a Crown of Gold about them, said by the Jews, to denote the Crown of the Kingdom. So on the South side of it, there stood the Candlestick with Seven Lamps, denoting the Seven Planets, six of which were turned bending towards the Lamp in the middle, and that towards the *Sanctum Sanctorum*, where the Mystery lay. And how far this may relate to some Astrological Arcanum, I shall leave it to Men acquainted in an apt dispensation of Types, and to those Masters of a contemplative Life, who have pass'd Proficients in the most sublime Science of Mystical Divinity.

As to the Seven Reed Pipe of Pan, a Man that knows any thing of Hieroglyphical Philosophy, knows that Pan is always drawn with a Pipe of Seven Reeds, and that those Seven Reeds denote the Seven Planets. And certainly *Virgil* had heard this Pipe, and could play upon it himself; when, in the Person of *Corydon*, he said to *Alexis*,

*Est mihi disparibus septem compacta Cicutis
Fistula, —————*

Having said before to him,

Mecum unâ in Sylvis imitabor Pannicando.

And why must it be expected that I should be more explanatory concerning this Pipe than *Virgil*?

Indeed,

Indeed, I make no doubt, but there have been, and are still many Men in the World, who through an affected Sublimity in Writing, or a Vanity of seeming Knowing in what others are not, have often been sinking themselves in Mystery, where, in truth, there is no Bottom. And again, on the other hand, I am as well satisfied, that there have been, and are still many Men in the World, who being deeply sick of a *Philautian* Arrogancy, to keep up their Repute for Learning among the Vulgar, have gone about to persuade them, that there is nothing valuable in Learning, forsooth, but what is known to their Learned Selves, though, in truth, there are Parts of Learning of far greater Excellency than any they ever came acquainted withal. If a meer *Grammarians*, having his Boys about him, should hear one *Logician* say to another, that a *Syllogism* contains a *maius extremum*, a *minus extremum*, and a *medium*; to make himself seem somebody among his Boys, he may say, that this is but *Cant*, *Offentration*, and *Enthusiasm*. For there are Men, who knowing nothing of some Sciences, and thinking it Shame to confess their Ignorance of any thing, or seeking a Subterfuge, or solacing themselves in their Want of knowledge, make their Boast, that those things they know not, are but Trifles, of little or no Use. But, as *Terence* says, *It's no wonder if a Whore acts impudently*. And are there not many Realities in Nature, which cannot be brought under every Man's Apprehension? A Man may talk long enough to a Person, born blind, of Light, Colours, and a Sun; but he shall never make him frame a Conception of them. You will say, we are not Blind, we have more Learning than yourself, and therefore you must not obtrude this on us. Be it so, you are more learned many Ways; yet if a Child tells a blind Man that there is a Sun, Light, and Colours, and the blind Man will not believe him, the Child cannot but smile at him for it, though the blind Man may have a sound Sense other-ways,

ways, and the Child is but a Child. And I say, there are many Truths in Nature, which cannot be known but by Experience (as all Masters of a Contemplative Life testify) and that the greatest Man of Parts in the World cannot apprehend them, without having had a peculiar and practical Initiation for taking Knowledge of them; according to what Zoroaster says in the Oracles, *Est quoddam intelligibile, quod oportet te intelligere mentis flore*, (by an efflorescent Excess of Mind.) The Lord Bacon tells us, that the *Magia Naturalis* is a *Setting of Forms a Work*. Now I would fain have any Man, who has not seen an Operation in that kind, to tell me (if he can) the Meaning of That; but I know it impossible.

We read of Socrates, that having perused the Works of Heraclitus, he said, what he understood of them was Excellent, and therefore he believed that what he did not understand of them was so too. And though I pretend not to any Excellency of Writing, I hope, what I have openly offered in my Considerations, may be thought tolerably Plausible by indifferent Judges; and if I leave a few Things Veil'd, I think there may be no great Reason for Censure. Some may object that if we give Way to Obscure Writing, all Enthusiasm breaks in upon us, and we know not how to distinguish betwixt the one and the other. To this I can only say, that if, when a Man reasons Openly, he reasons Soundly, and Writes in a Free and Unaffected Manner, I think it may be a rational Inducement for us to believe, that though sometimes, for Reasons known to himself, he leaves some few Things in Mystery, there may be some worthy Learning contained under them, which he conceives not fit to be Openly explained. So let any Man of Judgment read the *Traict* of Joannes Reuchlin, *De Verbo mirifico*, or his other Works; and though in many Places he finds him involv'd in Mystery, that he is not understood by him; yet

yet I believe, by what he has Writ openly, and his Way of Delivery, the Reader will be convinc'd, that he is no Muddy-brain'd Enthusiast, using an affected Obscurity, to beget Admiration in his Readers, for his Seeming deep Reach into Mysteries to others unknown. And so I may say of a multitude of others, of the like kind; Men whom a great Insight in the low Circumstances of human Life, had made truly humble, so that they could be no ways guilty of so poor a Vanity.

Having been thus far Explanatory in this Matter, I shall little value any Man's Censure in such Cases: Nay, I shall be so far from dealing precariously with him for his favourable Opinion, that I shall freely come with him to this Unexceptionable Accommodation, viz. That we laugh at each other by Consent, and let him pass for the Idiot, who laughs without Just Cause. And I shall conclude with Bede, who was Clamour'd, and superciliously Censured by some Men of his Time, for his searching into and writing on some Parts of Learning vulgarly not understood. *Nihil de Multitudine, sed de Paucorum probitate gloriantes, Soli Veritati insudamus.*

De Elem.
Philos. l. 2.
in proem.

JOHN BEAUMONT Jun.

I recommend the following Particulars to be inserted in their proper places, in my Considerations on the Theory of the Earth.

BOOK I. Chap. I. Pag. 10. Lin. 20. after *times* read, And hence, as the preceding Age was called *Ἀδύγνω*, *obscure*, so this Age was called *Μυθώδης*, *fabulous*. Ib. p. 11. in the last

last Line, after which read, And from hence spring their Multiplicity of Gods, according to the diversified Powers of Nature. At the end of the said Chapter add the following Paragraph.

I shall conclude this Point concerning the Learning of the Antients, with the Testimony of *Acerrohoes*; who (as the Learned *Isidore* tells in his 2. *libro*) says in some part of his Works, That Philosophy was in as great Perfection among the *Antient Chaldeans*, as it was in the times of *Aristotle*. Now the Testimony of this Man is the more to be valued, because he was indisputably the foundest Reasoner, and the most Learned among all the *Arabians*, and a great Favourer as well as Follower of *Aristotle*, he having writ Commentaries on his Works; so that had he not been thoroughly convinc'd of the height of Philosophy among the *Antient Chaldeans*, he would not have brought it in Competition with that in the Times of *Aristotle*. So again the

Learned *Pierius*, concerning the Learning of the Antient Egyptians; *Constantissima summa celebratum est, Sacerdotes Egyptios omnem Naturæ observationem adeo manifeste sibi cognitam professos, ut hereditariam possiderent.*

Chap. 4. p. 15. l. 7. after conceiving, add. And as for any other meaning in it, they would say with *Trismegistus*, in his *Minerva Mundi*; *Minime posteris credenda Fabula putetur esse Chaos.*

I have thought on many other Additions and Amendments, but I want Room to insert them here.

F I N I S.

LONDON: Printed, and are to be sold by *Randal Taylor* near Stationers Hall. 1694.

